

TO: Interested Parties
FROM: Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (FM3)
RE: Southern California Water Committee/California WaterFix Survey - Key Findings
DATE: July 19, 2017

Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (FM3) was commissioned by the Southern California Water Committee to conduct an independent survey that gauges Southern California residents' support for Governor Brown's California WaterFix project, as well as simulate the effects of messaging and possible outreach efforts.

This recent survey conducted among a random sample of 800 high-propensity voters in Southern California likely to vote in the November 2018 statewide election¹ finds that local voters are not very aware of the California WaterFix project, but strongly favor the project when they learn objective information about it. Favorable messaging drives support even higher while opposition messaging only modestly impacts support, which remains close to two-thirds (64%) after voters hear statements from both sides of the debate.

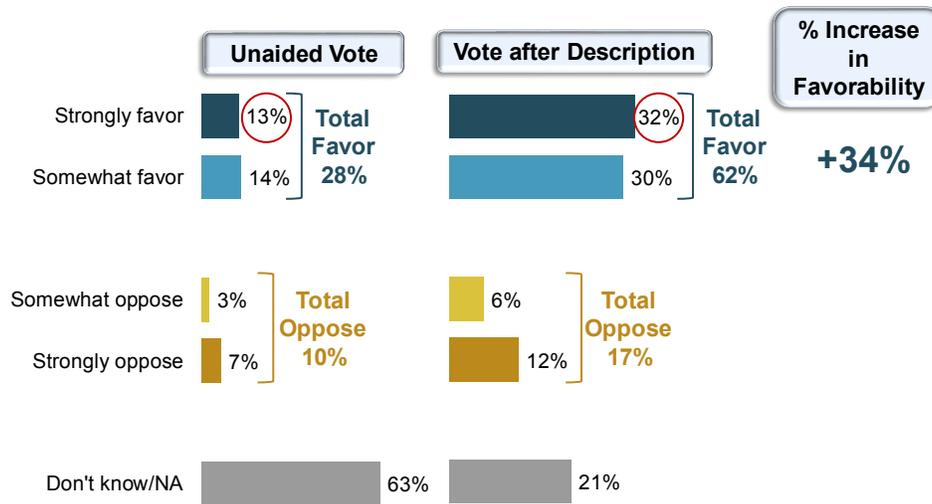
At the survey's outset, there is more support than opposition for the California WaterFix project by a factor of three to one, though a majority (63%) are uncertain.

Respondents were then read the following objective description of the project:

Southern California, including your County, receives a major portion of its water from snowpack in the Sierra Nevada mountains. The state's main water distribution system currently delivers that water to our region by routing it south through the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta – a complex network of aging dirt levees and canals but also an important ecosystem. Challenges in the Delta, however, have intensified as outdated infrastructure, environmental impacts, climate change, pollution and other factors make it increasingly difficult to move the water we rely on in Southern and Central California from the Sierra Nevada mountains. The California WaterFix project will invest \$15 billion to upgrade the state's existing water delivery system by constructing two new tunnels to move the water supplies underneath, rather than through, the fragile Delta – ultimately delivering it to Southern and Central California.

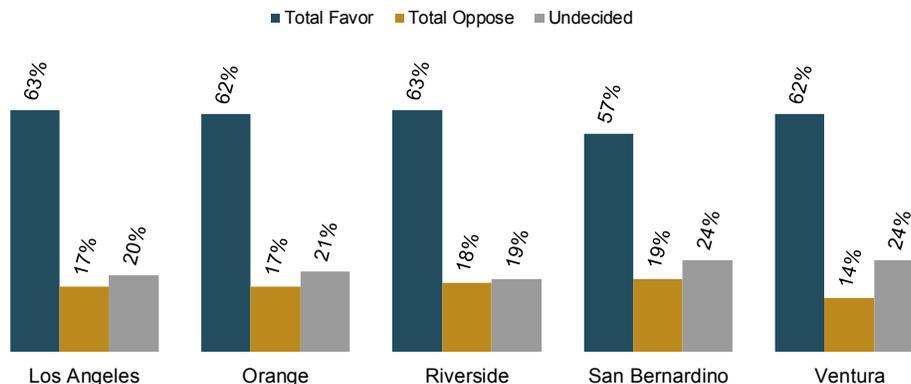
After hearing this description of the project, the percentage of those who favor the project increases 34 points, from 28 to 62 percent. Moreover, the intensity of favorable impressions—those who “strongly” favor—more than doubles, from 13 to 32 percent. Opposition increases just seven percentage points, from 10 to 17 percent, and the percentage of uncertain voters declines 42 percentage points, from 63 to 21 percent (see **Figure 1**).

Figure 1: Reaction to the California WaterFix Project Before and After an Objective Description of the Project



There is majority support for the California WaterFix project among nearly every demographic and geographic subgroup after respondents hear an objective description. Specifically, majorities exist across each county in which respondents are registered to vote (**Figure 2** below shows there is little difference in the level of support by county), gender and age groupings, ethnicity/race (Latinos, African Americans, Asian-Americans and whites), educational attainment, household income, home ownership, and support for environmental causes. Further, 71 percent of Democrats, 66 percent of independents and a plurality of Republicans (49 percent) favor the project after hearing the description.

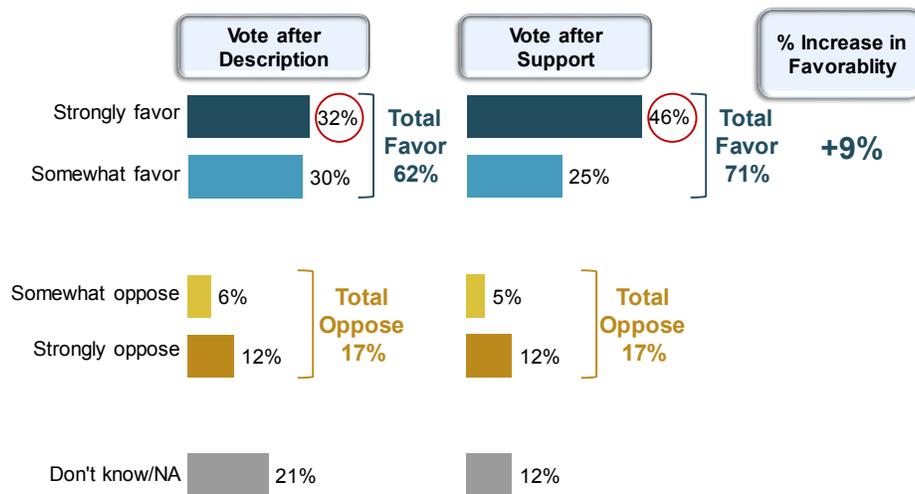
Figure 2: Reaction to the California WaterFix Project by County after Project Description



Impact of Educational Outreach:

After positive information about the project was provided (including such themes as the current threat to the region’s water supply, concern about future droughts, and the need to modernize an aging water infrastructure), support for the California WaterFix Project increased further by nine percentage points, from 62 to 71 percent (see Figure 3). The intensity of favorable impressions (those saying strongly favor) increased by 14 points, from 32 to 46 percent – nearly reaching one in every two voters. Voters’ uncertainty declined nine percentage points, from 21 to 12 percent, while the percentage opposed remained unchanged. Additionally, the aforementioned demographic and geographic groups continue to favor the project in high percentages. And after messaging, there is bi-partisan majority support, with 58 percent of Republicans now in favor.

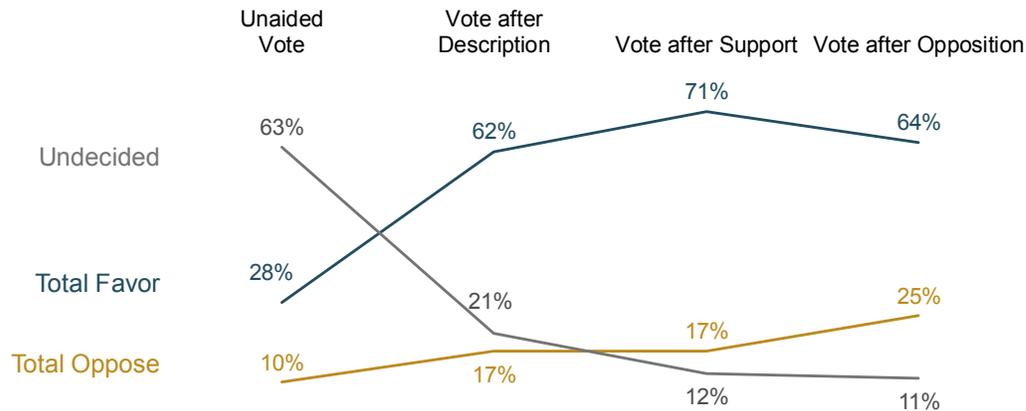
Figure 3: Reaction to the California WaterFix Project After an Objective Description and After Supportive Statements



Impact of Oppositional Messages:

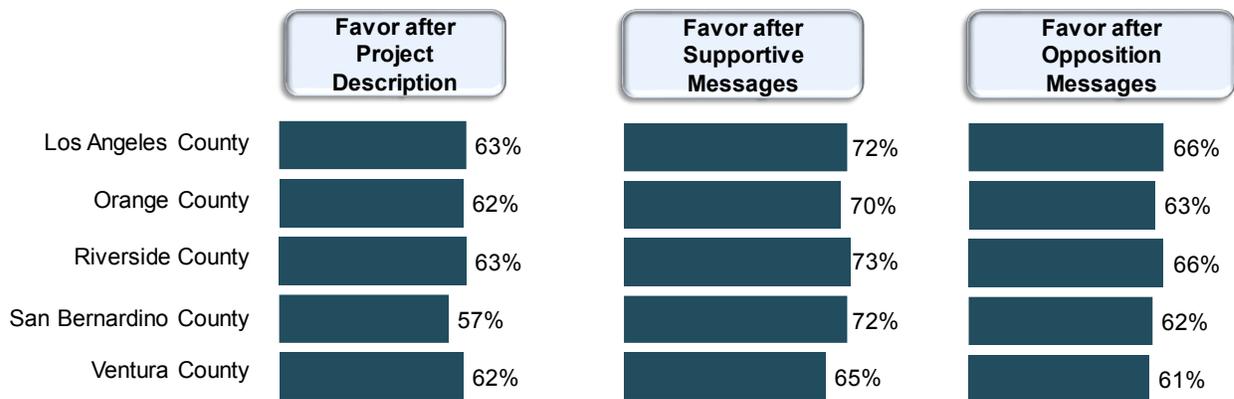
The most frequently-used messages from opponents of the California WaterFix project were also provided to respondents. These included themes such as project costs, preference for local water supplies over imported water, and concern for higher water bills. After all oppositional messages were presented, voters were again asked where they stood on the project; overall support, which reached its peak of 71 percent after supportive statements, declined seven percentage points to 64 percent. Overall opposition, which was 17 percent after supportive messages, increased by eight percentage points to 25 percent (see Figure 4 at the top of the following page).

Figure 4: Final Vote Progression after all Information



After all information was provided from both sides of the California WaterFix debate, nearly two-thirds of voters favored the project, and the gap between those who favored the project and those who opposed it was 39 percent in favor of project. Further, as seen in Figure 5, more than six-in-ten voters favor the project in each of the five counties in the survey sample after all the information was presented.

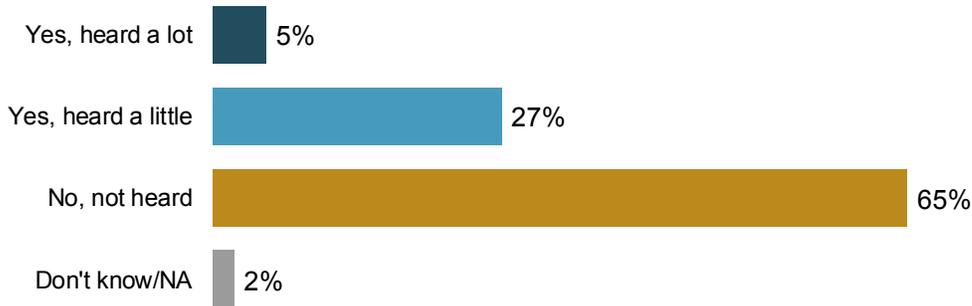
Figure 5: Reaction to the California WaterFix Project by County after Supportive and Oppositional Messages



Current Awareness of the Project:

At this time, there is low awareness of the California WaterFix project among Southern California voters. Before any information about the project was provided, about one-third (32%) reported they had heard about it, and only five percent had heard “a lot.” About two-thirds (67%) of those surveyed heard nothing or did not recall hearing anything (see Figure 6).

Figure 6: Current Level of Perceived Awareness about the California WaterFix Project



¹ Between May 31st and June 4th, 2017, Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (FM3) conducted a telephone survey of 800 voters in Southern California (including Los Angeles County n=400, Orange County n=150, Riverside County n=100, San Bernardino County n=100 and Ventura County n=50) who are likely to vote in the 2018 General Election. The margin of error for the full sample is +/- 3.6% and for half the sample it is +/- 4.9%; margins of error for subgroups will be higher. Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding error.